A DEVELOPING PROGRAM OF STUDENT TEACHING AT NORTHERN ILLINOIS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

BY

OSCAR MOODY CHUTE

B.S., Colby College, 1929

Ed.M., Harvard University, 1934

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE
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URBANA, ILLINOIS
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The report is a field study of a developing program of student teaching at Northern Illinois State Teachers College. This study is different from some types of field studies in that the author was a participant in the unfolding events portrayed. It is the result of much careful study, research, and planning. Basic patterns of activities engaged in and methods used in accomplishing ends sought were grounded in the literature of the field of teacher education, including materials from the closely allied fields of psychology, sociology, and philosophy. The judgments of experts in the field of teacher education were used as standards in the appraisals that were reported of plans devised, procedures followed, and evaluations made. References to the literature of the field appear at many points in this study to substantiate courses of action taken.

An accurate appraisal of the broad program outlined in this report cannot be made on the basis of pencil and paper tests or scores on examinations, because of the number and variety of activities with which this study is concerned. Nor can this program be evaluated on the basis of written statements by the participants in the evolving program above because the report is concerned with what people did and their attitudes, in addition to what they said. Ideally, an evaluation of the efforts of those who engaged in the activities described in this study should be based on the extent to which those activities improved services by graduates of the College to children in the classrooms, and contributions made to the communities where graduates teach. This problem of improved services to children and communities of northern Illinois is one that is recognized in this study but its appraisal is beyond its scope.

The main purpose of the study is to describe steps taken to coordinate and integrate the various and somewhat discrete elements associated with a student teaching program at Northern Illinois and to indicate the degree to which those procedures are in harmony with what the leaders in the field believe to be the most sound practices in training teachers. Evaluations of plans made, procedures followed, and results obtained appear at many points in the report. Failures and partial successes are reported along with achievements won, for one cannot expect complete understanding at every point to be reached by people who have such a diversity of backgrounds and experiences as those who cooperated in the projects described.

Chapter I defines the problem and outlines the procedures followed. In addition, this chapter gives the factors in the setting of the study at

Northern Illinois which delimit somewhat the responsibilities of the Department of Training which controls the administrative and supervisory policies for student teaching at the College. It should be noted that the only full-time member of the Department of Training is the Director. The educational program for all children at the McMurry (campus) Training School and the affiliated public schools is the responsibility of the principals and teachers in those schools, who in turn are responsible to the President of the College in the case of the campus school, and to superintendents of schools or boards of education in the public schools. Training teachers and other supervisors of student teachers are responsible to the Director of Training only for the instructional activities of student teachers. The primary responsibility of supervisory personnel in the student teaching program, therefore, is to a person or groups over whom the Department of Training has no authority. It must be clear, too, that administratively, no faculty member outside the Training Department has any responsibility or obligations to that department. This may explain the slow progress made and the failures met in the efforts of the several committees described in the study to obtain agreements within their own committees and to effect action from persons outside their groups. There is one important advantage, from the long view, of this administrative set-up. Whenever faculty members from several different departments do accept a proposal, the chances are good that they all understand it and have agreed to give the project a real opportunity to succeed. Thus, progress, when it is made, is slower but more sure than would be true in any administrative arrangement where a person in authority could put pressure on colleagues.

Chapter II outlines some administrative problems in connection with credits and hours assigned to the student teaching program and salaries paid to training teachers at Northern Illinois. Before the writer was appointed Director of Training at Northern Illinois, three parts of the program of student teaching at the College were under three different heads. Each part developed policies and awarded credits and hours without reference necessarily to what the other two were doing. Consequently, when the author was appointed to take the administrative and supervisory responsibility for all student teaching at Northern Illinois, it was decided to coordinate all policies with respect to credits and hours for student teaching. This was accomplished.

The questions revolving around equal pay to off-campus training teachers on sound bases of training, experience, and services performed are but partially solved and await a new administration in the public schools at DeKalb in order that a fresh attack may be launched on this problem.

Chapter II describes the activities of the Committee on Content of Student Teaching. The principal purpose of this Committee was to study the program of student teaching within the Training Department to make recommendations which would lead to the improvement of services to student teachers. During the period covered by the report, the Committee conducted a survey of supervisory practices in the Department of Training, sponsored study groups for training teachers in which the literature of the field of teacher education was discussed, and developed a list of principles upon which the evolving student teaching program was to be grounded. In addition, the Committee prepared an outline of background experiences, abilities, and understandings desired for prospective teachers. From this outline a check list was devised for faculty response. The check list was made up of items representing abilities and understandings used during the student teaching program, the background for which was developed in College classrooms. After staff members at the College have returned the check lists, it is planned to hold meetings between training teachers and appropriate faculty members on items of mutual concern. Two series of meetings were conducted between staff members and training teachers in the spring of 1946. During these meetings, agreements were reached in the fields of tests and measurements and sensory aids to learning. The points of emphasis and judgments agreed upon were stated in writing. Copies of these understandings will be in the hands of all training teachers, student teachers and appropriate staff members in the fall of 1946. It is expected that such understandings between College staff members and training teachers will decrease the difficulty of adjustment by student teachers in practicing the classroom theory learned under College instructors. A long series of similar meetings is planned.

The Committee soon found that some weaknesses it wished to correct were associated with areas outside the realm of its authority. It was believed, for example, that the student teacher's choice of an area for specialization had a direct bearing upon his success in student teaching, his probable chances in being placed in a teaching position after graduation, and his future happiness and adequate adjustment in the field. The Committee was convinced that freshmen at Northern Illinois did not have an opportunity to make an intelligent choice of majors. The Committee became convinced that several other problems outside the Department of Training affecting the student teacher required attention. Pursuant to a conference between the President and the Committee, the President of the College appointed a Committee on Integration whose function was to study areas in the total teacher education program at Northern Illinois that needed coordination and integration to propose

plans and procedures to effect improved services to students. It will be noted that the appointment and work of the Committee on Integration were direct outcomes of the activities of the Committee on Content of Student Teaching. The work of the Committee on Integration is treated in Chapter V.

Chapter IV outlines the development of an out-of-town student teaching program at Northern Illinois at the high school level. It was found in 1941 when the writer assumed his responsibilities as Director of Training at Northern Illinois that, in order to offer student teachers at the secondary level as rich a program in their student teaching locally as was true at the elementary level, it would be necessary to reduce the number of student teachers allotted to the DeKalb Township High School. In studying the experiences of the Northern Illinois home economics majors who did out-of-town student teaching, and plans for out-of-town student teaching developed by other teacher training institutions located in a number of states, it was decided to offer student teachers at the high school level an opportunity to live in communities outside DeKalb for a period of twelve weeks and perform the activities of teachers-in-training at the high schools in those communities. Thus, the local congestion at the high school with respect to student teaching was relieved. Valuable experiences considered desirable by experts in the field are offered to out-of-town high school student teachers that cannot be afforded to students in DeKalb because of the large number of student teachers served locally. Procedures used to obtain the best schools and training teachers available in these out-of-town situations in the light of basic principles of teacher training are found in Chapter IV.

It was stated above in connection with the work of the Committee on Content of Student Teaching that the Committee felt there were conditions in the teacher education program of the College needing correction but which were outside the realm of authority of the Committee. As was pointed out above, the President of the College, therefore, appointed a Committee on Integration whose function was to prepare plans and recommendations which, if carried out, would further coordinate and integrate elements of the total teacher education program at Northern Illinois. The Committee on Integration was to view teacher preparation as a whole and in its thinking and planning was to cut across departmental lines.

The Committee, during the period 1943-46, devoted its energies to three projects. The first proposal of the Committee on Integration was a recommendation to the Department of Education that guidance be given to freshmen in choosing their majors by including in a course in general psychology required of all freshmen a program of visitation to the

several levels of the campus and affiliated schools. It was hoped, through the observation of children at several stages of growth and development, that the course in psychology would be enriched. Extra hours were added to the course to provide time for school visits. The Department of Education tried this experiment over a period of two college years and then abandoned it because it interfered unduly with the regular logically organized work of the course. The problem of guidance for freshmen which this experiment attempted to solve will, in the opinion of the writer, be adequately taken care of in the program of student personnel planned by the Committee, to which reference is made later.

The second endeavor of the Committee on Integration was to develop a statement of philosophy in terms of purposes of the College to which most faculty members could subscribe. Thirty-seven statements of purposes from as many faculty members were received. The sub-committee studying these statements reported to the Committee on Integration that the replies were so varied that any attempt to classify them was a waste of time. A careful scrutiny of these statements by the writer, however, convinced him that there were many elements of similarity in the responses of the faculty. For example, it appeared to the author that most of the faculty responses indicated a belief that the College should play a dynamic, democratic role in the northern Illinois area it serves, that the essential purpose of Northern Illinois is to educate teachers for the field who have a sound liberal education focused on the needs of society along with necessary professional preparation for teaching.

A suggestion was made by a member of the Committee on Integration that the essential ideas could be teased out of the thirty-seven statements of purposes for Northern Illinois and arranged in the form of a check list to which faculty members could be asked to signify assent or disagreement. From the replies to such a list of items it might be possible to develop a statement of purposes for the College to which a large majority of the faculty could give allegiance. In the opinion of the writer, this step should be taken by the Committee in the near future.

The third effort of the Committee on Integration was the development of a blueprint for a program of student personnel services for the entire College. Plans outlined by the Committee on Integration seek to coordinate the work of eighteen different agencies giving personnel services to students at Northern Illinois and set up the administrative and supervisory machinery for continuous evaluation of the program. These plans have been accepted by the faculty and administration and the first steps have been taken to implement these recommendations. The proposals of the Committee appear in Chapter V.

Chapter VI gives a description of the work of the Child Guidance

Committee and its efforts to tie together discrete factors of the program of teacher education at Northern Illinois from the freshman year through student teaching in the senior year. The purpose of this Committee was to help prospective teachers better to understand children through a coordination of studies in mental hygiene, through the work of the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research, through an acquaintance with case study techniques, and through a study of children at the student teaching level.

Recommendations

As a result of a critical examination and application of the literature of the teacher education field and of participation in the student teaching program over a period of five years, the writer recommends the following:

1. A meeting or series of meetings should be held between the President of the College, the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of Training, the newly elected Superintendent of the DeKalb Grade and High School systems and representatives of both grade and high school Boards of Education early in the fall of 1946. The purpose of these meetings should be to review the contracts with both Boards with respect to financial arrangements for student teaching in an attempt to determine a more equitable salary schedule for DeKalb Public School training teachers on the basis of preparation to act in the role of training teachers and experience in serving student teachers. Some consideration should be given to the amount of service rendered in terms of the number of hours devoted to supervisory activities by the training teachers. Agreements reached at these meetings should be in terms of policies only. Details of a salary schedule for off-campus training teachers should be worked out by training teachers, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Director of Training. Details of the salary schedule should, of course, be accepted by the two Boards and the President before being put into operation. Provision should be made for a review each year of salary policies and practices by all parties concerned.

2. The Committee on Content of Student Teaching should continue its sponsorship of meetings between College instructors of subject matter and theory and training teachers as described in Chapter III. A planning meeting should be held by the Committee preceding each meeting of faculty members and training teachers. The Committee should meet after each faculty-training teacher meeting for the purpose of evaluation. The discussions should center around the work of professional courses for the first few meetings after September 1, 1946, before the problems associated with the teaching of subject matter in the College and the use of subject matter in the training classrooms are attacked. This order of

topics is suggested because the difficulty of communication between training teachers and professional course instructors is less than would be true in the case of training teachers and subject matter specialists. Those who have a large number of common interests and understandings should set their houses in order before they conduct conversations with those with whom complete understanding may be more difficult. Experience is needed by all in meeting the problems of the dynamics of group deliberations, and these lessons will be learned with less chance of serious failure if the possibilities of communication between the members of the group are enhanced by bringing together participants whose backgrounds are similar. Later on the Committee should provide the leadership in bringing together subject matter specialists and training teachers to thresh out problems of mutual concern to the end that student teachers will find fewer and fewer difficulties in making the transfer between College subject matter classrooms and teaching situations.

3. Representatives of student teacher groups should be included in the membership of the Committee on Content of Student Teaching, the Committee on Integration and the Child Guidance Committee.

4. The Committee on Integration should continue to explore the possibilities of coordination and integration of the College program and should lend any further assistance possible in working toward the implementation of its recommendations for a coordinated program of counseling services for students.

5. The general pattern of inservice training for out-of-town training teachers as described in Chapter IV should be reinstituted now that travel restrictions have eased.

6. The out-of-town student teaching program should be expanded as need arises to keep the number of student teachers at the DeKalb Township High School below the agreed-upon limits.

7. A twelve weeks' full-time program of student teaching similar to the out-of-town situations should be tried experimentally at the McMurry, Glidden, and DeKalb Township High Schools during the next two years, with a few students at each level. A careful evaluation of this program should prove whether or not it is possible at Northern Illinois to offer student teachers in town more adequate training for teaching under present plans than under arrangements whereby students could devote themselves exclusively to student teaching over a shorter period of time.

8. Since Northern Illinois is faced with a greatly increased enrollment during the next few years and because it is hoped that the number of prospective teachers at the elementary level will represent a substantial part of that increase, an out-of-town student teaching program for elementary majors should be developed whereby each student teacher

would spend six weeks full-time teaching in DeKalb and six weeks full-time teaching at some outlying affiliated school.

9. Because of increasing enrollments in the Department of Training and because of increasing demands upon the time of the Director by the out-of-town student teaching program and by faculty committee work, it is recommended that one full-time assistant be added to the Director's staff in the near future.

VITA

Oscar Moody Chute was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on November 16, 1908. He graduated from the Danvers, Massachusetts, High School in 1925. He received his B.S. degree from Colby College, Waterville, Maine, in 1929, and his Ed.M. degree from Harvard University in 1934.

After teaching and coaching at the South Hadley, Massachusetts, High School during the school year 1929-1930, he served as Principal of the Sutton, Massachusetts, High and Center Schools from 1930 to 1937. From 1937 to 1941 he was the Superintendent of City Schools at Litchfield, Illinois. In 1941 he accepted a position as Director of Training at Northern Illinois State Teachers College at DeKalb, Illinois, and continued to serve in that capacity until 1946, with the exception of a period of eighteen months when he served with the armed forces.

He is the author of an article entitled "A Cooperative Out-of-Town Student Teaching Program at the High School Level" published in *Educational Administration and Supervision* in May, 1944. He was the co-author with Mr. O. E. Peterson of an article, "A Child Guidance Program and Teacher Preparation" which appeared in *Educational Administration and Supervision* in December, 1943.

He is a member of Kappa Phi Kappa and Phi Delta Kappa.